

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2003

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SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT ON SOVIET HARASSMENT OF ORLOV GROUP

REF: MOSCOW 1937

1. SUMMARY. DISSIDENT SOURCES FILLED US IN ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING ORLOV GROUP EVENING OF FEBRUARY 10, INCLUDING DETAILS OF ORLOV'S ARREST, SECOND SEARCH OF ORLOV'S APARTMENT FEBRUARY 10, QUESTIONING OF GROUP MEMBER ALEKSEYEVA FEBRUARY 9, AND SITUATION OF CHAIRMAN OF GROUP'S UKRAINIAN "CHAPTER" RUDENKO. WE ALSO RECEIVED FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT GINZBURG'S HANDLING OF HARD CURRENCY. END SUMMARY.

2. SEVERAL OF MOSCOW'S LEADING HUMAN RIGHTS DISSIDENTS GATHERED AT APARTMENT OF VALENTIN TURCHIN (CHAIRMAN, SOVIET CHAPTER OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL) EVENING OF FEBRUARY 10 TO ASSESS CURRENT ROUND OF HARASSMENT OF ORLOV GROUP MEMBERS. THEIR VIEWS ON MEANING OF HARASSMENT, AND OUR COMMENT ON THEM, REPORTED SEPTEL. NEW FACTS REGARDING THE HARASSMENT ARE OUTLINED BELOW.

3. ORLOV'S ARREST. WE UNDERSTAND ORLOV UNEXPECTEDLY
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APPEARED AT MOSCOW APARTMENT OF GROUP MEMBER LYUDA ALEKSEYEVA AFTERNOON OF FEBRUARY 9. IN CONSULTATION WITH ALEKSEYEVA AND GROUP MEMBER SHCHARANSKIY, ORLOV DECIDED TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE THAT AFTERNOON. ONLY HANDFUL OF CORRESPONDENTS SHOWED UP, BECAUSE OF SHORT NOTICE AND ALSO BECAUSE GROUP MEMBERS WHO ATTEMPTED TO REACH CORRESPONDENTS BY TELEPHONE DID NOT DISCLOSE ORLOV'S WHEREABOUTS OUT OF FEAR

HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY BE ARRESTED. AT PRESS CONFERENCE ORLOV REPORTEDLY SAID HE DID NOT INTEND TO CONTINUE HIDING BUT ALSO DID NOT PLAN TO GO TO HIS APARTMENT, WHICH WAS HEAVILY PATROLLED BY PLAINCLOTHESMEN.

4. WE UNDERSTAND ORLOV ALSO RELEASED TEXTS OF THREE DOCUMENTS, DATED FEBRUARY 8 AND SIGNED ONLY BY HIM, WHICH HE APPARENTLY PREPARED DURING HIS ABSENCE FROM MOSCOW:

- ONE DISCUSSES THE LIKELY TACTICS OF THE AUTHORITIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE CURRENT ARRESTS, ARGUING THAT MOSCOW WILL ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE THE WEST BEFORE AND DURING THE BELGRADE MEETING THAT GINZBURG, RUDENKO, TIKHIY AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS WERE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE FOR CRIMINAL ACTS, NOT FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT PER SE, AND THAT ORLOV HIMSELF PROBABLY WILL BE CHARGED WITH A POLITICAL CRIME BUT WILL BE GIVEN LENIENT TREATMENT SO THAT MOSCOW CAN CLAIM IT IS ACTING "IN THE SPIRIT OF HELSINKI;"
- ANOTHER PROPOSES THAT IN CONNECTION WITH THE BELGRADE MEETING THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS PUSH FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION, WITH THE AIM OF PRESSURING THE USSR AND ITS ALLIES TO DECLASSIFY DATA ABOUT NATURAL DISASTERS, CRIME STATISTICS, AND VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKINGS REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS;
- THE THIRD DOCUMENT, AN APPEAL TO WESTERN GOVERNMENTS AS WELL AS TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, WARNS THAT 1977 CAN BECOME THE YEAR OF A RETURN TO STALINISM, THAT THE USSR'S DISREGARD FOR ITS INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS IN THE HUMAN

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RIGHTS FIELD COULD BE FOLLOWED BY SOVIET DISREGARD OF OTHER INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKINGS, AND THAT MOSCOW'S "BRUTAL STRUGGLE WITH THE PEACEFUL MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USSR" WILL NOT RESOLVE THE USSR'S DIFFICULTIES (TECHNOLOGICAL BACKWARDNESS, SHORTAGE OF MEAT IN MANY INDUSTRIAL CENTERS, GROWTH OF CRIME AMONG YOUTH).

5. FOLLOWING THE PRESS CONFERENCE, ORLOV AND HIS COLLEAGUES REPORTEDLY DECIDED HE SHOULD STAY IN ALEKSEYEVA'S APARTMENT UNTIL IT SEEMED SAFE TO LEAVE. HE SPENT THE NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 9 THERE. MID-MORNING FEBRUARY 10 SEVEN MILITIAMEN AND ONE PLAINCLOTHESMAN RANG THE DOORBELL, WERE ADMITTED, AND PICKED UP ORLOV, SAYING VAGUELY THAT HE HAD BEEN "HIDING FROM INVESTIGATION." ORLOV ACCOMPANIED THEM PEACEFULLY AND HAS NOT BEEN HEARD FROM SINCE.

6. SECOND SEARCH OF ORLOV'S APARTMENT. LATE AFTERNOON OF FEBRUARY 10, ORLOV'S WIFE OPENED APARTMENT DOOR IN RESPONSE TO BELL SHE THOUGHT WAS RUNG BY SYMPATHETIC FREINDS BUT

INSTEAD WAS CONFRONTED BY SIX MILITAMEN AND A PLAINSCLOTHES-MAN WITH A SEARCH ORDER, WHICH SHE NOTED WAS DATED FEB 2. THEY CONDUCTED TWO-HOURS SEARCH OF PREMISES, CONFISCATING ORLOV'S SCIENTIFIC PAPERS (HE HAD BEEN DOING HIS OWN WORK IN THEORETICAL PHYSICS) AS WELL AS HIS PERSONAL DOCUMENTS (TRADE UNION CARD, PAPERS CONCERNING HIS MEMBERSHIP IN ARMENIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ETC.). SHE INSISTED THAT ONE OF HER FRIENDS LIVING NEARBY BE PRESENT TO ACT AS WITNESS; WHEN THIS WAS REFUSED, SHE SUCCEEDED IN JUMPING FROM FIRST-FLOOR WINDOW WHERE, BY LUCK, SHE SAW A FRIEND STANDING NEARBY. AFTER HEATED ARGUMENT WITH MILITIA, SHE WAS ALLOWED TO BRING FRIEND INTO APARTMENT. MRS. ORLOV HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO APPEAR AT PROCURACY AFTERNOON OF FEB 11 (AND PLANS TO COMPLY).

7. GINZBURG'S HANDLING OF HARD CURRENCY TRANSFERS FROM ABROAD. TURCHIN AND OTHER CLOSE ASSOCIATES OF GINZBURG DIS-CONFIDENTIAL

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MISSED AS "TYPICAL KGB DISINFORMATION" THE RUMOR REPORTED REFTTEL CONCERNING "HARD CURRENCY RUBLES." TURCHIN, WHO IN THE PAST HAS BEEN A RELIABLE SOURCE, NOTED THAT THE KGB COULD FORCE VIRTUALLY ANY SOVIET CITIZEN TO PROVIDE TESTIMONY AGAINST GINZBURG OR TO SPREAD RUMORS ABOUT HIS "ILLEGAL" ACTIVITIES (WE OF COURSE DID NOT DISCLOSE SOVIET SOURCE OF RUMOR). TURCHIN SAID THAT TO BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE GINZBURG HAD BEEN CAREFUL ABOUT HANDLING OF THE "SOLZHENITSYN FUND" AND INDEED HAD KEPT METICULOUS RECORDS -- NOW IN POSSESSION OF AUTHORITIES -- ON EACH DISBURSEMENT. GINZBURG MAY HAVE GIVEN AWAY SOME "SERIES D COUPONS" IN THE PAST, TURCHIN THOUGHT, BUT FACT THAT KGB PLANTED AND THEN "DISCOVERED" HARD CURRENCY IN GINZBURG'S APARTMENT INDICATED THEY DID NOT HAVE SOLID CASE AGAINST HIM.

8. IN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS:

--GROUP MEMBER ALEKSEYEVA WAS CALLED IN FOR HER FOURTH SESSION OF QUESTIONING ON FEBRUARY 9; SHE WAS SHOWN NINE OF THE ORLOV GROUP'S DOCUMENTS AND WAS ASKED TO VERIFY THAT THOSE WHO SIGNED THE DOCUMENTS (ORLOV'S SIGNATURE WAS ON ALL OF THEM) ALSO HELPED PREPARE THEM (SHE REFUSED TO ANSWER); SHE WAS TOLD INVESTIGATION HAD TO DO WITH "CHRONICLE OF CURRENT EVENTS," IN WHICH ORLOV GROUP DOCUMENTS HAD APPEARED.

--IN SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT, ALEKSEYEVA WAS RECENTLY TOLD BY MOSCOW EMIGRATION AUTHORITIES SHE MUST LEAVE USSR BY FEBRUARY 21 (SHE PLANS TO DO SO); --CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP'S UKRAINIAN CHAPTER MIKOLA RUDENKO REPORTEDLY IS STILL UNDER DETENTION IN DONETSK IN CONNECTION WITH THE CASE OF UKRAINIAN GROUP MEMBER TIKHIY (IN WHOSE HOME A REVOLVER ALLEGEDLY WAS FOUND);

AS IN GINZBURG'S CASE, FORMAL CHARGES HAVE NOT YET BEEN
ANNOUNCED AGAINST RUDENKO.
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